

WASHINGTON, DC – Today Rep. Pete Stark introduced a House Resolution expressing the sense of Congress that all branches of the Federal Government should limit purchases of coffee to those suppliers that are certified to have paid coffee farmers a fair price for their products.

“It is only fair that the farmers that grow the beans that supply the world’s booming coffee market be able to share in the profits they’ve rightly earned,” Stark said. “Its an atrocity that so many small farmers are being ripped off by corrupt coffee brokers and forced to live in poverty”

Currently, many coffee farmers only receive 5 to 10 cents per pound of coffee, an amount that is barely equal to the cost of production. Rep. Stark’s resolution calls on all Federal agencies to buy coffee that is “fair trade certified.” Coffee carrying this certification comes with the guarantee that it has been purchased from coffee growers at a fair market value, currently \$1.26 per pound. This slightly higher wholesale price gives a dramatic boost to the standard of living of coffee farmers throughout the world by ensuring they receive a reasonable price that their families can live on.

“The additional cost to the Federal government for purchasing trade certified coffee is minimal,” Stark continued. “But, the example set by taking this small step is monumental. It will help promote efforts to improve the lives of poor farmers and their families throughout the world.

“If America truly wishes to be a protector of freedom and human rights around the globe, we cannot turn a blind eye to the greed that is denying economic opportunity to millions of poor farmers. It is time we stood up for our values and put corrupt coffee suppliers out of business. I hope passage of this resolution will be one small step in that direction.”

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